

CITY OF TAUNTON CHARTER UPDATE

A summary of current practices in the City government, proposed changes, and explanations of the changes.

TOPIC	CURRENT	PROPOSED	WHY
Executive Branch (Mayor)	2-year term	4-year term	Gives the Mayor time to carry out their agenda without having to be constantly campaigning
	Department Director appointments split between Mayor and Municipal Council	Appoints all Department Directors subject to approval of the Municipal Council	Gives the Mayor the ability to effectively and efficiently manage the day-to-day operations of the City as the Chief Executive Officer
	Mayor can pocket veto, Municipal Council cannot override	Mayor can veto with written objections, Municipal Council can override with 2/3 vote	Creates a much-needed check-and-balance between the executive and legislative branches that does not currently exist
Legislative Branch (Municipal Council)	Committee meetings occur at 5:30pm before regular meeting at 7:00pm	Regular meetings alternate with committee meetings every other week	Allows committee meetings, which is where the bulk of discussion occurs, to go on uninterrupted
	No formal process for Municipal Council to provide oversight	Ability to conduct investigations and obtain information from city officers	Check-and-balance so that Municipal Council can provide necessary oversight if something is wrong
Terms	All elected officeholders are elected to 2-year terms	Staggered 3-year terms for all elected boards (Municipal Council, School Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals)	Reduces the number of candidates elected at once, thereby allowing voters to become knowledgeable about a greater amount of candidates and creating more competitive elections
	Term limits only for Mayor (12 years: 6 consecutive 2-year terms)	Consecutive term limits (12 years) for Mayor and all elected boards (Municipal Council, School Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals)	Allows new candidates the opportunity to be elected, but also allows former officeholders to return after a cooling off period if the voters so choose
Elections	Biennial elections	Annual elections	This is required to facilitate staggered 3-year terms
	Unclear if there are recall elections	Recall elections possible for all elected officeholders	Allows the voters to remove elected officeholders for egregious actions with reasonable guardrails
Finance	No Capital Improvement Program	Capital Improvement Program must be submitted by the Mayor to the Municipal Council every 2 years	Ensures that there is a constantly updated plan for the future so that critical infrastructure issues are no longer neglected
	Annual outside audit managed by the City Auditor under the supervision of the Mayor	Annual outside audit overseen by an Audit Committee	Promotes sound financial management that is conducted by an independent entity and overseen jointly by the executive and legislative branches
Citizen Relief Measures	No process currently in place	Initiative petitions and referendum petitions requiring signatures of 15% of voters	Gives the voters a mechanism of direct engagement in their government if they feel so strongly about a particular issue